

National Congress of American Indians, history buffs partial to the 7th U.S. Cavalry, the National Organization for Women, Women Against Pornography and last—but hardly least—Atari Inc. of Sunnyvale, California.

Kesten did it by inventing and marketing an X-rated video game he calls "Custer's Revenge," and Atari, whose current best-seller goes by the name of "Yar's Revenge," is not amused. Nor are any of the other aforementioned parties, none of whom have the remotest fiduciary interest in the \$1.7 billion video game cassette market that is dominated by Atari.

In "Custer's Revenge," the late George Armstrong Custer gets even with Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse, who killed Custer along with 276 others under his command at the Little Big Horn back in 1876. Not by blasting at attacking Indian braves (appearing as myriad asteroids) but by repeatedly raping—with only his hat, neckerchief and boots on—a solitary Indian woman amid a torrent of Indian arrows. As the bugle sounds, Custer racks up points. And for every sale of "Custer's Revenge" at \$49.95 a cassette, so does Kesten and his company, American Multiple Industries of Northridge, Calif. Appropriate and also tawdry is the sleazy game's slogan, "When you score, you score." And score AMI will, since Kesten expected to have 500,000 such cassettes in stores by last Christmas.

Kesten reportedly sees himself as a small businessman unfairly maligned by the likes of NOW, which brands him a pornographer. He describes the game as "a fun sequence where the woman is enjoying a sexual act willingly."

In spite of the attention on the game's exploitation of women, the fact that it's an *Indian* maiden on whom this un-

speakable number is being performed is too easily overlooked.

In the final analysis, the only response that really seems to matter is that of Chief Atari himself. Michael Moone, President of Atari's Consumer Electronics Division is about to drag Kesten into court—not for doing sexual/surrogate violence to women, or Indians, or to good taste, but to the corporate image of Warner Communications, Atari's parent. What particularly irks Moone is the legend on the box, "For Use With the Atari Video Game System."

"We've spent hundreds of millions to build a business on family entertainment," fumes Moone, "and we want those games off the market." Easier said than done. In fact American Multiple says it will soon introduce 23 other X-rated video game cassettes. Neither Kesten nor his partner, Joel Martin, seem to be the least bit disturbed by the ruckus they've caused.

They should be. Not only are the various Indian rights groups outraged (The National Tribal Chairman's Association suggested Kesten name the game after *his* grandfather and replace the Indian woman in the game with someone from his own family), but also up in arms are members of the Texas-based Custer Society. Instead of just making noise, such groups are appealing directly to local community boards and governments to ban this noxious game—and they might very well succeed. Already, one Long Island community has voted for decency by banning sale of the game.

#### **American Multiple Industries Responds**

*Editor's Note: In accordance with Commission policy, American Multiple Industries was given an opportunity to respond to the above Up Front item. Its*

#### **Fun & Games on the Little Big Horn**

Stuart Kesten, a 41-year-old former marketing executive for Sterling Drug Inc., makers of Bayer Aspirin, must be reaching for something stronger these days to relieve a self-induced headache brought on by alienating the entire Sioux Nation, American Indian Movement, the

*response follows:*

We sincerely appreciate the opportunity to respond to your article about our company's *Mystique* adult video games. Unfortunately, the article overstates and exaggerates many of the factors behind the turmoil one of our games has caused.

"Custer's Revenge" is one of three adult video games our company introduced in November, 1982, and that particular game has been the focus of many protests. However, better than 90 percent of those protesting this game have *never* seen what they're protesting, for if they had they would clearly see for themselves that our game does *not* have any rape sequence within it, as it has been unjustly accused of. Further, to state that our games promote sexual violence is like stating that "Donkey Kong" promotes abductions, or that "Pac Man" promotes cannibalism. Absurd!

It should be pointed out that our *Mystique* games are *not* sold to minors, and our packaging clearly states that. Also, they are *not* games for use in arcades. Simply, our product is for adults, to be played with in the privacy of their own homes.

*Perspectives* magazine is about civil rights, and in the past few months our company's rights have often been overlooked by many alleged responsible parties. At the same time the rights of those who might wish to purchase our products have been threatened.

To now, our company has kept relatively silent about many of the statements made by our detractors, even though most have been blatantly irresponsible and ignorant of many of the facts.

We find it unfortunate that we have been branded as "pornographers." How-

ever, this is further evidence of the irresponsibility of those that have protested our products. The fact is that the management team of our company is comprised of people from the cosmetics and toy industries.

Atari, Inc. brought suit against our company for alleged trademark infringement. While our attorneys and their attorneys have discussed a positive resolve to this matter, Atari's management have spoken many times in the media about us in a negative light. We have refrained from responding to their irresponsible statements and their sophomoric pot shots at us, to this time. However, suffice to state that they, too, have infringed on our rights, and that matter will be resolved in another forum at another time.

The Long Island community your article referred to is Suffolk County (New York). There, too, our rights (as well as yours) were violated when their legislature proposed to enact legislation to ban our product. Early in December our company brought suit against Suffolk County.

Clearly, our company and our recently introduced line of adult video games have caused a stir across the country. Upon examination, we wonder why.

Stuart Kesten

President

Mystique Division of

American Multiple Industries, Inc.